

Pensioners Protest New Round of Planned Pension Cuts in Greece



Athens, November 4 (RHC)-- The anti-government rally held in the Greek capital of Athens on Thursday saw more than 5,000 protesters marching to the Labor Ministry and outside parliament. The demonstrators chanted slogans against Labor Minister George Katrougalos and burnt copies of his recent letter which explained the new pension changes.

A protest organizer said the pensioners would send the letter back to the minister and continue protests. "They have torn us apart with all the cuts, and they are telling us we are supposed to be happy with these measures," Dimos Koumbouris said, adding that the pensioners will continue protests to get the changes canceled.

A separate demonstration against government's austerity measures took place on Thursday in Greece's second-largest city, Thessaloniki, while the largest labor union in the country called a 24-hour strike for December 8th.

Greece's decision last year to comply with a series of reforms proposed by international creditors has triggered increasing public anger as many accuse Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of trampling on the promises he made before taking office in January 2015.

Tsipras had vowed to free Greece from excessive demands by creditors like the European Union (EU)

and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but he later bowed to pressure and accepted deeper and deeper cuts to secure the badly needed funds under a controversial bailout program.

The Greek prime minister said Thursday that the reforms have been successful and Greece could receive part of the promised loans from the IMF and EU institutions by the end of 2016.

"We have kept our commitments. The successful completion of the first (bailout) review demonstrates our willingness to reform," Tsipras said, vowing that Greece would attain its planned growth targets next year.

IMF and EU inspectors are due in Greece by the end of November to monitor the country's progress in carrying out reforms in labor, unions and banking sectors.

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